

The City’s System-Wide Vision for the Green Line

It is the City’s desire and expectation that the Green Line will provide access to jobs, housing, services, and cultural and recreational resources in Northwest Seattle, Southwest Seattle and the Center City through a well-connected network of monorail stations, pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities. The monorail will also be a defining element of urban form within the communities it serves, and will be designed to reinforce existing character and support neighborhood development objectives. Within this larger vision, the City is crafting—with community input—a concept for each station area and segment of the monorail corridor that builds on the objectives and policies of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and respective adopted neighborhood plans.

Belltown/Downtown/Pioneer Square Concept - Making Connections

Downtown is the urban heart of Seattle and the activity center for the region. Its health, vitality and mobility is critical to the city’s and the region’s continued success and livability. New transportation projects, such as the monorail and light rail, can reinforce the role of downtown as the primary activity center and hub, and also add to the increasing desirability of downtown residential areas. In order to do so, however, transportation systems must be carefully planned and designed so as to ensure that the quality of the streetscape and public realm—which is so important to downtown’s identity and health—is protected. It is also critical that all the transportation projects work together to provide an interlocking, convenient, and efficient method of traveling to, through, and around downtown, city neighborhoods, and the surrounding metropolitan region. The focus of the monorail stations downtown will be to serve the commercial and residential areas of Belltown, downtown core, and Pioneer Square. At the scale of the individual block, the stations also can serve as catalysts for redevelopment of properties adjacent to the stations to further complement the core.

Key Corridor Elements and Actions

Corridor Operations

Because the monorail guideway will change the configuration of streets along the Green Line corridor, the City will reexamine how these streets will function in the future for general traffic, transit, freight, bicycles, and pedestrians. Key actions for the Downtown segment may include:

- Ensuring that operations and capacity on Fifth and Second Avenues and on Stewart Street under the guideway is maintained while enhancing the pedestrian function by widening sidewalks along the corridor alignment, buffering pedestrians from traffic and providing human-scaled street furniture.
- Ensuring railroad service capacity expansion at King Street Station.
- Improving access to and through downtown by bicycle.
- Determining the most appropriate bus stop configurations given dual goals of efficient transit operations and minimization of impacts on general purpose travel lanes.

Land Use Policy for the Guideway Zone

The monorail guideway will effectively create a new “zone” within which the guideway structure and monorail transit service are defining elements of urban form. It may be appropriate for land use policy within this virtual zone to respond to these new conditions. Height and density issues for Downtown are being dealt with at a broader scale .

Streetscape Design in the Guideway Corridor

Insertion of the monorail guideway into city streets will necessitate redesign of the corridor streetscape. Columns will typically be located in a parking or travel lane on the side of the street, creating an opportunity to consider a menu of streetscape design options. Actions applicable to Downtown segment may include:

- Using the guideway along Fifth and Second Avenues to provide pedestrian amenities, such as lighting, wayfinding signage, weather shelters, etc.
- Preparing Street Master Plans for Fifth and Second Avenues.

Key Station Area Elements and Actions

Station Area Access

The key to making the most of the monorail is to provide a network of clear, safe, and well-detailed paths providing multiple options for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders to reach each station. In this way, the monorail can serve as one part of an interconnected transportation system for intra- and inter-neighborhood mobility. Toward that end, each station will have a comprehensive access plan outlining needed improvements. Key actions for Downtown stations may include:

- Developing a circulation and access plan for King Street Station.
- Providing grade separated pedestrian access between Safeco Field and the Royal Brougham monorail station.
- Improving pedestrian environment to the east along Royal Brougham to provide better access to parking in the area and a pedestrian connection to the Chinatown/International District.
- Creating an event transit station along Third Avenue South including the monorail station and bus facilities for events at Safeco Field and the Seahawk Exhibition Center.
- Improving pedestrian connection along Fourth Avenue South to better connect Chinatown/International District to the Safeco Field area and monorail station.
- Developing fully integrated multi-modal transportation hub plans for both the King Street Station and 5th & Stewart Street station areas.
- Installing a comprehensive wayfinding system to direct transit riders to the many points of interests and activity in the area as part of the downtown wayfinding system currently in development.

Key Station Area Elements and Actions *continued*

- Developing a hill climb from First Avenue to Second Avenue to connect the station level at Madison & Second to the Colman Dock pedestrian bridge level.
- Providing clear and direct bus access up to First Hill and the medical center.

Station Area Parking

Following guidance from the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the Green Line project does not envision new park-and-ride facilities and instead emphasizes alternatives to private automobile access to transit stations. To ensure that monorail stations do no create parking problems within station areas, a parking mitigation plan will be developed and implemented by SMP and the City of Seattle Department of Transportation. Additional actions Downtown may also include:

- Using existing parking facilities and possibly developing new shared parking facilities at the edges of downtown with direct access to Interstates 90 and 5 and SR99 that could be used by event attendees and monorail commuters.

Station Area Land Use Policy

The monorail will create the potential for transit-oriented development within station areas, and can assist in creating more housing options within communities. In most cases, the vision that the Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans establish for these station areas is already transit and pedestrian-oriented, but current land use policy and zoning may not provide the best mix of incentives for this kind of development. Key actions for Downtown may include:

- Allowing for the development of residential/commercial/entertainment districts to the east and west of the stadiums.
- Promoting the redevelopment of several blocks between the Retail Core and Pike Place Market.
- Encouraging associated or co-development around the station sites to take advantage of the density allowed and incorporate the station into the new development.
- Coordinating with City’s ongoing downtown height and density study.

Strategic Development Sites in the Station Area

Supporting transit through development requires appropriate zoning, available sites for redevelopment, and a ready market. Redevelopment of currently under-utilized sites, or sites that could have a strong relationship to a monorail station could be catalysts to encourage desired development more broadly within station areas. Key sites in Downtown may include:

- Integrating the North Lot development into the larger multi-modal transportation hub plan developed for King Street Station.
- Redeveloping the Sinking Ship Garage site into a centerpiece for the Pioneer Square community.
- Redeveloping the parking lot at the corner of Fifth & Stewart Street.

The Public Realm of the Station Area

Beyond basic access improvements, there are opportunities to enhance the public realm around each station in support of transit and pedestrian-oriented development. These kinds of improvements are often what lend identity and character to communities and make them memorable. Key actions in Downtown may include:

- Creating a Pike Place Market gateway project as part of surrounding future redevelopment.
- Making the guideway a destination in the Pioneer Square and Belltown neighborhoods.
- Designing intermodal transportation hubs at King Street Station and Fifth & Stewart Street station that serve the community as well as commuters and travelers.

